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TITLE**Cicero's personal omens: 'Pater Patriae' and 'Electus Diuorum'****KEYWORDS**

Marcus Tullius Cicero; Omens; Roman Religion; Roman Republic; Symbolic Thought

ABSTRACT

Should the modern reader go through the works of Ancient Romans, he would be baffled by the several hundreds of omens narrated in those living words of the Roman World. Through those works written by and about men of whom we have more questions than answers, we are left with a series of omens, tell-tale of the belief that gods sent signs of what the future held regarding Rome and its leaders. Those omens are a by-product of their world, a world where, if satisfied, "citizen gods" acted as protective deities of their communities. Therefore, communication between gods and men was an essential tool to acquire ritual and divinatory knowledge about the divine and to maintain the *pax deorum*, essential for the community's survival.

By the time of Cicero, and to his great distress, the Republic was in crisis as the consequences of the Empire's expansion were felt. The political changes of the Late Republic also resulted in the rise of personal omens regarding the future of the city's political leaders, omens showing their predestination to greatness or their looming death. Cicero was no exception.

Our presentation will attempt to provide a brief symbolic analysis and explanation of those omens and, more importantly, to use those omens' constructed narrative to effort a better understanding of Cicero's image being conveyed, in which context, and by whom. Additionally, we also hope to use those omens as a case-study for the dominant narrative constructions of Late Republican personal omens. Thus, we aim to provide a better understanding of Cicero and his omens' place in his time, of how they are part of a wider phenomenon of late republican omens, and of how the operation and manipulation of popular opinion, political propaganda and Roman religion worked together to construct such portrayal of him.